UC-NRLF
B 2 830 144

BERKELEY
LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA

24 B.

WITH THE TIDE

AND OTHER POEMS

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/withtideotherpoe00fostrich

WITH THE TIDE

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

ELEANOR FOSTER

Irene Defosse Nov. 1896.

GAY AND BIRD
22 BEDFORD STREET, STRAND
LONDON
1896

LOAN STACK

3851 E

NOTE

I gladly take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to the Editor of *The Gentlewoman* for his kind permission to reprint 'With the Tide,' 'Flaming June,' 'The Unseen,' 'A Regret,' 'The Distant Sea,' 'Her Portrait,' and 'A Christmas Rose.'

I have also to thank the Editor of *Atalanta* for permission to include 'A Song of the Sea.'

ELEANOR FOSTER.

520

CONTENTS

LYRICS—

	PAGE
WITH THE TIDE	3
A NOCTURNE	5
A LILT OF LILIES	7
A SLUMBER SONG	9
'TOWARDS THE LIGHT'	11
TO-MORROW	13
A POSSIBLE VICTORY	15
WAITING	17
DAY DREAMS	18
LOVE'S CERTAINTIES	20
A QUEEN OF HEARTS	22
BITTER-SWEET	24
TIDE-TAKEN	26
WRECKED	28
FLIRTATION	30
'FLAMING JUNE'	31

PAGE

THE LAND OF LOVE: A FANTASY . . 32
AN OLD STORY 34
WHO KNOWS? 36
HEART SICKNESS 38
THE WINDS 40
POT-POURRI 42
DRIFTING 44
THROUGH THE MISTS 46
A SONG OF THE SEA 48
CUI BONO? 50
UNEXPRESSED 51
AN INTERLUDE 53
DEAD ROSES 55
AT THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR . . 57

SONNETS—

THE OUTER DARKNESS 61
PROVEN! 62
THE SEA 63
SHADOW AND SUNSHINE . . . 64
SILENCE 65
THE DISTANT SEA 66
PALM SUNDAY 67

PAGE

CLOVELLY 68
LOST 69
CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI 70
HER PORTRAIT 71
AUTUMN 72
UNPOPULARITY 73
A CHRISTMAS ROSE 74

RONDEAUS AND OTHER CAPRICES—

TRIOLETS 77
A REGRET 79
A GOLDEN DAY 80
CONCERNING JOY 81
MISGIVINGS 82
SWEET VIOLETS 83
THE REASON WHY 84
A RONDEL OF RETURNING . . . 85
TO LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON . . 86
A SUMMER IDYLL 88
MIRAGE 90
THE UNSEEN 92
CROSS-PURPOSES 94

LYRICS

WITH THE TIDE

THE tide went out with a sob and a sigh.
(*Speak low, my dear, speak low.*)
Without word or tear was their last
good-bye,
But hearts may break although eyes be dry.
(*Speak low, my dear, speak low!*)

What 's for a woman except to wait?
(*Winds are wild and nights are dark.*)
Love is a fever that 's fiercer than hate;
It burned in her veins from early till late.
(*Winds are wild and nights are dark.*)

She watched the waves in their ebb and flow,
(*Life is long to a waiting heart*)
And dreamed the story she dared not know
All the dreary day, till the sun was low.
(*Life is long to a waiting heart.*)

And one grey, grey dawn, when the cold night
died,
(*Speak low, my dear, speak low.*)
An empty boat reached the old pier side,
And a girl's soul fled with the outward tide.
(*Speak low, my dear, speak low!*)

A NOCTURNE

A TENDER calm
Enwrapped the trancèd garden in its spell,
While a faint, dreamy fragrance breathed like balm
In all the air; a visionary grace
Crowned each dim flower: it seemed the very place
Sweet spirits dwell.

The paths gleamed white
In the faint, mystic shining of the moon,
Who smiled in silver beauty on the night,
And through the garden sighed a seeking breeze,
Wooing from love-sweet lilies 'neath the trees
The heart of June.

The river sang
A song the fairest noontide never heard,
And from each red rose-petal softly rang
A tiny chime of Elfin music, dear,

Dear beyond all delights, more low and clear
Than any bird.

The great cool night
Stretched forth her hands in tender comforting
And soothed the day's mistakes, and put to flight
All pain, all weariness, all hot desire,
That ached and throbbed and burned like some fierce fire,
Some serpent's sting.

The world of care
And petty weariness faded away,
Lost in the spacious splendours, wide and fair:
Sad, earth-sick souls, unfettered, dared to rise,
And saw, for one long moment, Paradise—
Then dawned the day!

A LILT OF LILIES

PACING shady garden pathways
In long, dream-laden hours,
We lend our love in turn to each
Of all their wealth of flowers.

The red rose blushes in her pride,
Summer's acknowledged queen;
The pansy whispers tender thoughts,
Nestling in leafy green.

But tall and fair the lilies stand,
White as an angel's heart,
Their patient beauty, pale and pure,
Seeming a thing apart.

A vision from the spirit-world,
All free from earthly soil,
They breathe their subtle fragrance forth
To bless our daily toil.

Sweetest of all in the still hush
Of dusky twilight peace,
Their loveliness tells of the time
When pain and care shall cease;

Till, in the golden sunset hour,
It almost seems to me
That I can see God's lilies grow
Beside His crystal sea.

God's lilies, fairer far than aught
Our earth-dimmed eyes have seen,
Fadeless, and greatly beautiful
In wondrous heavenly sheen.

For I think that when His children
To His Home-garden go,
They will find, fulfilled and perfect,
All flowers they loved below.

A SLUMBER SONG

SIGH, South Wind, through the long, lush grass;
Whisper a lullaby as you pass;
Say to a maiden with golden hair
That the Land of Dreams has a beauty rare.

Tell her to close her tirèd eyes;
They are brown and brave, but a shadow lies
In their earnest depths; you must chase away
That little shadow, South Wind, to-day!

Murmur low of the far, blue sea,
Of the plashing waves in their summer glee;
Speak of that garden—she will know!—
Where the damask roses and pansies grow.

Bring her down by the orchard wall,
Till she breathe the scent of the lilies tall,
White with their perfumed foam of flowers:—
Let her dream, for once, of the bygone hours!

Softly, softly! She soon will awake—
One message more, South Wind, you must take:
Tell her the past was sweet, but say
There is coming a dearer and brighter day!

Tell her to wait, and that she and I
Will stand in the garden by-and-by:
Tell her to wait, and the murmuring sea
Shall sing her a song she shall hear with me!

Tell her I live for my lady's smile;
That the longest lane ends after awhile:
Tell it all, South Wind, and tell it true:
But I wish *I* could tell it instead of you!

'TOWARDS THE LIGHT'

'Remember always that all valleys wind towards the light.'

PATIENCE, sweet heart!
Long are the valley's windings; very drear
The darkness and the silence and the fear,
Yet every valley windeth towards the light
Though now by faith we walk and not by sight:
Patience, sweet heart!

Patience, sweet heart!
From blackest midnight fairest day is born,
And densest darkness yields at length to morn:
For those who dare to trust, and, trusting, wait,
Peace comes, pain passes, either soon or late:
Patience, sweet heart!

Patience, sweet heart!
Only the truest love and strongest heart
Is ever set to play such weary part;
God knows thy strength and not beyond thy power
Will make thee bear this burden for an hour:
Patience, sweet heart!

Patience, sweet heart!
Knowing that love, which is not all of earth,
Grows only stronger, dearer, far more worth
For every trial, every conflict passed,
And from all fires will issue at the last.
Patience, sweet heart!

TO-MORROW

WE enter Dreamland's stately halls,
And soft, soft winds sigh through them;
We hear low murmuring waterfalls
And turn our steps unto them.
A thousand others share our quest,
Men, of world-warfare weary,
Pale women, seeking but for rest,
Finding this earth most dreary.

To each, to all, a promise fair
Is breathed in accents tender;
To some, fresh strength to do and dare,
To some, a strong defender.
A whisper sweet, a fairy spell,
Should set us free from sorrow.—
Most musical the murmur fell,
The magic word 'To-morrow.'

O wondrous, rainbow-tinted charm!
O garden-ground of gladness!
O bliss, where lurks no thought of harm
Nor any shade of sadness!
All eagerly the gift we crave,
The joy of dreams we borrow:
Even despairing hearts grow brave
In hope of that 'To-morrow.'

Alas! too soon the gentle tones
Of dreamland voices vanish:
We wake to hear the bitter moans
Of grief no dreams can banish.
Dark, dark, and cold is our 'To-day,'
—No sunshine-crowned 'To-morrow'—
And very toilsome seems our way,
And very sore our sorrow.

A POSSIBLE VICTORY

NO strength can come from sighing
O'er what is past;
Why cherish Grief undying,
Or hold Pain fast?

Say to this weary weeping
A long farewell,
Nor Sorrow rouse from sleeping,
But break her spell.

Must a whole life be wasted
For one mistake?
Because Woe has been tasted
Must thine heart break?

Not so, but (though the graver
For lessons learned)
Turn back to Life the braver,
With honour earned.

And in some glad To-morrow
New joy shall shine;
Joy, that a conquered sorrow
Will make divine.

WAITING

SO for wealth you were toiling, toiling,
To lay at her feet its store?
So misjudging a woman's nature?
Gold is good, but love is more.

Oh, she was weary, waiting, waiting,
With nothing that she could do,
Only to wonder, wonder ever,
How was faring the world with you!

Oh, she was weary, waiting, waiting,
For the news that never came;
Longing, until her heart was broken,
For the love she dared not claim.

Then she laid down her weary waiting,
And God took her broken heart
Tenderly, in His tender keeping,
To heal, with Heaven's love, its smart.

DAY DREAMS

A DEEP, old-fashioned window sill,
A space of sunlit leisure
To think sweet thoughts, were such your will,
Or drowse through at your pleasure.

Through the half-opened casement float
Soft sounds and scents of summer,
While through the grass and o'er the moat
Steals up a fair newcomer.

Nor one, nor two: they come and smile
With glad and lovely faces:—
Dear Day Dreams! for an hour beguile
Us with your gentle graces!

Weave with your slender hands a spell
To banish care and sorrow:
Say in your silver tones, 'All 's well,
Or will be well—To-morrow!'

You meet our eyes with proud, shy glance;
We drink your mystic chalice . . .
And then, farewell! For off you dance,
And falls our fairy palace!

LOVE'S CERTAINTIES

SWEET heart, what has the World to say
To you and me?
Past she sweeps in her raiment gay,
And proud is she.
But I, when I look in your dear, dark eyes,
Can never see
Aught but your love and its great surprise,
And its mystery.
And the World, so cruel and fair and fine,
Grows dim, for we
Forget her beauty, refuse her wine,
And go glad and free.

Sweet heart, what if the World in her pride
Disdainèd so
Should look upon us who stand aside
And wrathful grow?
What if she stretch her cool right hand
With a gesture slow,

Take us and crush us where we stand,
And bid us know
Never a soul may slight her thus
And scatheless go?
Sweet heart, what would it matter to us?
Not much, I trow!

Sweet heart, little in life or death
Is worth a tear,
For Life is vain, as the Preacher saith,
And Death's sharp spear
Is vain to me, while your perfect face
So pure and dear
Leans over me, and the holy grace,
Content and clear,
Of your earnest eyes forbids a doubt
Of There or Here—
And we know, if the World should cast us out,
Love casts out fear!

A QUEEN OF HEARTS

NOUGHT, said I, hath this damsel to alarm:
More winsome maids there are a score;
There equal her a hundred more
In charm.

See, said I, she is not so wondrous fair;
They who for Stella's smiles aspire
Need more this caution—'Of the fire
Beware!'

And yet—ah me!—what miracle is this?
The proudest beauties do I slight
To dream of her by day and night
I wis!

She seemeth now a rose hedged in with thorns,
And rosebuds blossom in her face,
That every gift and every grace
Adorns.

It is a mystery that none can spell:
What makes my lady Queen of Hearts?
This answer, only, Heaven imparts:
'Tis well!

BITTER-SWEET

THROUGH the golden glow of June weather
The sunset shone fair o'er the heather,
And two watched its splendour together:
Yet deep in each heart was a moan
For a dearer gladness once known!

With a dreary, desolate crying,
Like the wail of an anguish undying,
The weird winds of autumn went sighing:
Yet through storm-riven clouds gleamed afar
The light of a long-hidden star!

Full gaily the minstrel was singing;
His songs with young rapture were ringing,
Like bird-notes his heart's joy out-flinging:
Yet sweeter by far grew his voice
When heart's grief forbade him rejoice!

Best gifts we are slowest in choosing,
For nought is attained but by losing,
Nor won save through soul-sick refusing:
Yet the gain is made great through the loss,
The crown only reached by the cross!

TIDE-TAKEN

LAY all your tirèd toil aside to-day;
Give me your hand and let me be your guide
Down to the river, where the shadows play
In netted gold and brown, and rushes sway
In soft south winds along the water-side.

Our empty boat rocks idly on the stream:
Sweet heart, forget all work and weariness—
Such days as this are dearer than a dream,
Days that are fair in truth when fair they seem,
And come but rarely our dull world to bless.

So—lean back so, in utter, still content,
Tide-taken past the flowers and the trees,
Past fern-hung banks and roses with the scent
Of love and June and joy together blent,
Lading with fragrance every passing breeze.

No need for speech, when speech would spoil the spell;
I see your thoughts deep in your true brown eyes,
And you read all my secret heart as well,
Knowing the love no words could ever tell—
And so we drift and dream in Paradise!

WRECKED

H, many a ship with her sails all set
Comes over the harbour-bar,
Nor ever a day died in splendour yet
But some one returned from far.
For one or another the dear news rings
Of a hope, deferred, come true,
And in somebody's heart the gladness sings,
And somebody's sky grows blue.

But still there are those who must watch and wait,
Who pray through their blinding tears
That the ships they love may come home, though late,
Until hope is lost in fears.
O the terrible patience, born of woe,
That takes its place by their side
When they have no choice but to know, to know
The grief they must needs abide!

O the sense of loss and the grinding pain,
When, instead of 'Welcome Home'
Sweeps over the soul that 'Never Again,'
As bitter as salt sea foam!
Ay, many and many a ship has sailed
Safe over a storm-swept sea,—
But *my* boat, that went forth in faith, has failed,
And returns no more to me!

FLIRTATION

HE who with the fire will play
Seldom leaveth it, they say,
Save with burnèd fingers.
Yet the pastime charmeth so!
Man is like the moth, I trow,
And near danger lingers.

You, my lady, sweet and shy,
Don't you know there's peril nigh
In those smiling glances?
You, my lord, of gallant mien,
Have a care for foes unseen
And for luckless chances!

All in fun, perhaps, at first;
Hidden pitfalls are the worst,
And may bruise you badly:
Love, when laughed at, laughs in turn,
Laughs and leaves you—with your burn,
To reflect on sadly!

'FLAMING JUNE'

(Written for the late Lord Leighton's picture)

IN glory of gold and of scarlet,
In radiance of light,
In magical fulness of beauty,
Most fair to the sight,
We see you and greet you and crown you,
Queen Paramount here,
Supreme in your loveliness reigning,
No rival to fear.

The silence of summer-tide lingers
Unbroken and sweet,
Where the splendour of summer-tide scatters
Its wealth at your feet,
Dreaming on in your passionate love-time,
Your rapturous noon,
Whilst heart's homage bows ever before you,
O wonderful June!

THE LAND OF LOVE: A FANTASY

ONCE I forsook this Earth of ours,
Forgetting all its sadness,
For a far land of light and flowers,
The very home of gladness,
Where all the air is blue and fair,
For storms and winter come not there.

I wandered in its pleasant ways
And alleys full of roses;
I heard the birds sing songs of praise
Adown its garden-closes.
Tall lilies stand on either hand,
Guarding the pathways of that land.

The murmuring of distant streams
Sounded like silver chiming,
While softest sunlight fell in gleams
Athwart the woodbine's climbing,
Nor sickening fear nor bitter tear
Disturbed the rapture strange and dear.

A mystic whisper opes the gate
To all this Eden glory,
For none may cross its bounds, till Fate
Breathes in their hearts Love's story.
But, barriers past, they find at last
All weary grief behind them cast.

Alas! that in this sweetest land
So brief is our abiding:
The long, long days of bliss we planned
Pass swift as waters gliding,
And all our gain is heart's sore pain,
And all our strong desire is vain!

Oh, dear lost land, of joy divine,
Backward my memory glances
O'er glowing days when thou wert mine,
Before these changeful chances!
Yet brave hearts learn, though life be stern,
Only through strife true peace they learn.

AN OLD STORY

LOVE crossed the sea one early morn, when
the delicate dawn was breaking,
Made fast his boat in the quiet bay, and, his
way through the meadows taking,
Reached a grey old house where the roses grew and
jasmine vines were creeping,
And sang to himself a low, sweet song, unheard by
the world a-sleeping.

He brushed the dew from flower and thorn, and woke
the birds to singing
(For they thought that the day, stealing up from the
East, some wonderful gift was bringing),
And he plucked a branch of the roses red, around the
lattice climbing,
And still through the cool and silent air his song
went rhyming, rhyming.

O marvellous song, that no one knows, save this one
marvellous singer!

O song that reaches the heart of Hope, over land and
sea to bring her—
Sweet song that she follows from dawn to dark, and
from dark to the gladsome morrow,
For joy it can make more joyful still, and it lightens
the weariest sorrow!

So Hope rose up in the grey old house, and stretched
fair hands of greeting,
And the face of Love grew strange and bright in the
silence of their meeting.
Then down by the garden paths they passed in the
dewy light together,
To the boat that rocked on the summer waves in the
radiant summer weather.

They sailed till summer days were done and autumn
winds were raving;
They sailed 'neath the gloom of winter skies, the
storms of winter braving;
They sailed till the gracious springtide came, in
garments of queenly seeming,
And thus they will sail for ever and aye—or so the
world is dreaming!

WHO KNOWS?

OUT of the dark
The sun arose;
After the storm
Came still repose;
When chill winds rage
The hearth-fire glows,
And Spring is but sleeping
'Neath Winter snows.

Gloom and tempest
And creeping fear;
Hearts going sad
And dull of cheer;
Grief for ourselves
And for those more dear:
Yet when Hope is failing
Then Help draws near.

Love lies bleeding
  From subtle foes,
But Pain brings a gift
  None other bestows;
And then, after all,
  We may find (who knows?)
In the hand of Autumn
  A June-sweet rose!

HEART SICKNESS

HARD it is to endure
When life grows grey;
Hard to think Heaven's self sure,
Hard to think aught can endure
When Love's away.
List to the sea in its wailing,
Many a sore heart is quailing.

If there were hope of light
After the storm—
If the still shore were in sight,
Or gleam of its far-off light,
Its sunshine warm!
But our long-tried trust is failing,
And the truest hearts are quailing.

Nothing but weary strife
Our strength to spend:
We dreamt of a crownèd life;
We woke to a ceaseless strife—
And to what end?
Yet somewhere Love is availing
Despite our tried hearts' quailing!

THE WINDS

FROM the North a wind came shouting
Across the barren waste,
All summer softness flouting
In eager strength and haste:
In Winter's wide dominions
Proclaimed his royal right,
Then spread his mighty pinions
And vanished in the night.

From the East a wind came shiv'ring,
Chill as some awful fear,
And set the bare boughs quiv'ring
At first touch of his spear.
Across the great sea, sweeping,
Like toys he tossed the waves;
There rose most bitter weeping
For those in ocean graves.

From the West a wind came wailing;
Desire was in her voice,
Some anguish, unavailing,
Forbade her to rejoice.
Through the dim pine-wood, sighing,
She fled with rain of tears,
Her restless sorrow crying
For respite from her fears.

From the South a wind came, bringing
The scent of fragrant flowers,
The breath of roses clinging
Around her sunlit hours.
She came in fairest June-time
To whisper to the earth
That after night comes noon-time,
And after sadness, mirth!

POT-POURRI

UMMER without is fair and free,
Within, gilds oaken panels,
And sets aglow this gallery
Of portraits and old annals.

A place for day-dreams! Only note
In these quaint, deep recesses
The china-jars, whence frailly float
Soft perfumes, like caresses.

Pot-pourri—withered flowers and leaves,
Fresh once in girlish fingers:
A scent of sadness to them cleaves
And in their fragrance lingers!

The rustle of the silken gowns
That passed them by has vanished:
The beating hearts, the smiles and frowns,
Our tyrant, Time, has banished.

We sigh for them, their joys, their cares—
Yet do we once remember
Our story shall grow old as theirs
And our June turn December?

DRIFTING

THEY drifted by in the early morn,
When dewdrops glistened on flower and thorn,
While athwart the stream
Fell a shy, soft gleam,
Tender kiss of a day new-born.

They drifted by in the gold noonlight;
Never a glance gave they left or right:
O radiant pleasure
Sweet beyond measure!
Far was all thought of dreary night.

They drifted by in the twilight grey;
Gone past recall was the glowing day:
Across the river
Chill night-winds shiver:
Still, there is time the boat to stay!

But they drifted by till darkness fell,
And whither the boat passed, who shall tell?
There were quicksands near
And no light to steer—
None dare make answer, 'All is well!'

THROUGH THE MISTS

THE autumn mists lie on the hills,
And, ghost-like, creep along the vale,
The autumn wind the damp air fills
With weary moan and restless wail.
O, but my heart is sad!
Will it ever yet be glad?

The autumn rain is falling fast,
Gone are the glowing, golden days
To swell the treasures of the Past
And earth is draped in sombre greys.
Yet why should I make moan?
Pain is not mine alone.

But winter days are coming yet
With howling storms and hungry seas,
With all their passion of regret
For summer sunshine, soft south breeze!
O world, so full of grief!
Will nothing yield relief?

Yea, after Winter comes sweet Spring,
And with the springtide, heart's content
And joyance, gifts as of a king
Who will not of his grace repent,
And, with those royal gifts,
Lo! all the sadness lifts!

Then, Heart, in strengthful love and trust
Be brave to meet both gloom and gleam,
Knowing that pass the darkness must,
Sooner, perchance, than thou darest dream.
And, in those coming days,
All thy prayer shall be praise!

A SONG OF THE SEA

FAR away are the clear green waves,
Foam crested and fair—
O, very far! And my spirit craves
For the salt sea air!

I can almost hear the rush and roar
Of the flowing tide;
I can almost see the rocky shore
And the steep cliff-side.

And I am fain for the ocean's face
Though veiled and grey,
For the ocean's voice and the wide, free space,
And the waves' wild play.

O great, deep heart of the mighty sea,
Give me of thy peace!

Let me learn thy music of mystery,
Thy song of release!

Speak to me, teach me, for I would know
Of thy secrets wise!
—Alas for the mist and the storm and the snow
And the lost replies!

CUI BONO?

WHAT 'S a smile good for?
Good to hide and to reveal;
False and cold, or fair and leal;
Good to give sweet eyes new grace,
Lending light to loveliest face—
Perhaps!

What 's a heart good for?
Good to teach and good to learn;
Swift to spend, nor slow to earn;
First to give (maybe to steal)
Quickly hurt and quick to heal,—
Perhaps!

What 's a life good for?
Good to toil through cold and heat;
Good to lay before your feet,
And, for Love's sake, much avail,
Or, for Love's sake, grandly fail:
Perhaps!

UNEXPRESSED

THE summer wind whispers amongst the beeches,
The summer sunshine sets the world aglow,
The river pauses, in fair shining reaches,
Then falls to chanting songs both sweet and low.

And yet, O God, none can translate the measure
That winds and waters sing, to speech of ours:
There is a mystic wealth of hidden treasure
In the most common of thy wayside flowers!

So are concealed the thoughts that crave expression,
Pent in the prison-house of Heart's Desire:
Our lives wax weary, full of sad suppression
And melodies unsung to any lyre.

The grief that has no language is the saddest;
Voices that soothe a slighter pain grow dumb:

The silent joy is evermore the gladdest,
Though gleaming with sweet dew of tears that come.

So be it. But, perchance, when times and places
Slip from us and Heaven's endless day dawns bright,
Our striving souls, set free from earthbound spaces,
Shall sing these inarticulate songs aright!

AN INTERLUDE

A TENDER silence fell between the songs,
And then the frail voice of a violin
Made mellow music: such, we dream, belongs
To fair white spirits, free from soil of sin.

A delicate delight filled all the air,
And still the mystic cadence rose and fell,
Making its plaint of sorrows none might share,
Telling sweet stories never tongue could tell.

There was a hidden sadness in its mirth,
Yet underneath the sadness radiant joy;
Dim visions dawned of some new, glorious earth,
Unstained and perfect; gold without alloy.

The notes dropped lower; like the shy caress
Of one who little knows, yet greatly dares,
Love trembled o'er the strings, faint with that stress
Of strong desire, whose hopes are pleading prayers.

So sank the music to its sighing close;
The wondrous voice left half a heaven untold.
Only an interlude! Yet one white rose
Wears grace more royal than the sunflowers' gold.

DEAD ROSES

SUMMER was here, but Summer in the city,
When all the world grows faint with fervid heat,
Lacks half its charm, and thoughts are touched with pity
That turn to toilers in the crowded street.

A grave-eyed woman, with a face where sorrow
Had set its seal, over her desk bent low;
Her busy pen meant daily bread: to-morrow
Must bear its own anxiety or woe.

Sudden she paused, and all her face grew tender;
Laid down her writing with a whispered word:—
Beneath her window sang a voice whose slender
Pathetic tones her very heart had stirred.

'Twas but an old, old song, full scant of beauty—
An old, old song, that brought back Yesterday,
When Life meant Love, and solemn-visaged Duty
Concealed her frowns beneath an aspect gay.

The sweetness stung: Ah me for life's dead roses
Withered upon the grave of old regret! . . .
The song passed by to dreary streets and closes,
And on one listener's eyelids tears were wet.

AT THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR

HUSH and hearken with all your heart
At the close of the year!
Listen, before the faint footfalls depart,
Even though, listening, the hot tears start,
Even though listening bring ache and smart
At the close of the year!

Life has a story to tell to you
At the close of the year:
Mayhap 'tis in simple words and few
(The simpler the story the oftener true),
Or it may be one that to hear is to rue
At the close of the year.

Life has a lesson for you to learn
At the close of the year,
And O, but the teaching is often stern!

Yet over the task, though you grieve and yearn,
The prize is high that you thus may earn
At the close of the year.

Life has a secret you yet may spell
At the close of some year:
Deep in her heart does its beauty dwell;
God hid it there, and (who can tell?)
You, loving and listening, may hear 'It is well'
At the close of this year!

SONNETS

THE OUTER DARKNESS

I WANDERED in the darkness of the night,
Forlorn, in very agony of fear;
Alone, despite the kindly faces near,
And left outside, when all within was bright,
The outer darkness darker for the light:
I cried aloud, but none my cry could hear,
Nor, haply hearing, dry one scalding tear,
Nor give me back my radiant, lost delight.

Fruitless, indeed, is murmuring, and vain:
Once in each life the desert must be passed
In utter loneliness and grief and pain.
The nobler souls accept their lot nor wail,
Knowing that God is good, and at the last
They too will find His goodness cannot fail.

PROVEN!

DEAR friend, whom I count honour to call friend,
Pause for a moment in the busy ways
Of earnest life and tender, helpful days
And listen to the greeting I would send
To you, so worth that grace great poets lend
To crown great women. Ah, that my poor praise
Could speak of your strong heart in some fit phrase,
Own, as I would, my debt that knows no end!

For such a kindly hand to clasp in mine,
So woman-gentle and so queenly-true,
Pointing in drearest darkness to the sign
Of distant dawning, surely there is due
More than calm gratitude? . . . A gift divine
Your royal friendship binds my heart to you!

THE SEA

IN shoaling purple-blues, 'neath summer skies,
The hushed waves ripple on the drowsy shore
And to the dreamy earth sing lullabies
Most mystic-sweet, full of mid-ocean lore
And cadenced music, whispered o'er and o'er.
All good the great sea then seems in our eyes,
So radiant-lovely, in sweet sun-kissed guise,
Nor strays a careless thought to storms in store.

But when grim winter lashes into foam
The vast, wide world of waters, and sets free
The angry winds, which, shouting furiously,
Drive wild grey clouds scudding across heaven's dome
And break brave ships in pieces, far from home,
We say 'Thank God, "*There* shall be no more sea,"'

SHADOW AND SUNSHINE

THE dim, soft shadows of the day-dawn grey
Wrap all the quiet earth in silence deep;
The birds' faint fluting still sounds half-asleep;
The dew lies thick on every leafy spray,
And things familiar, looked on day by day,
Take to themselves strange shapes: the still clouds creep
Across the hills, as though they fain would keep
Some solemn secret, hidden far away.

Sudden, across the sky, the rose-red glow
Of sunrise laughs, while all the silent air
Breaks into singing, and above, below,
In splendid blue and gold, the day shines fair.
So may your twilight sadness pass, dear heart,
Love's gladness dawn and all the shades depart!

SILENCE

TIRED of the noise and tumult of the street
I sought the sacred spot where Silence sleeps,
Alone, serene and still, nor smiles nor weeps,
Time passing by with reverent, unshod feet,
Loth to disturb a rest so calm and sweet.
I sought, but found not. Not where ocean deeps
Call each to each, nor where the pine-wood keeps
Its strange, wise secrets, could I Silence greet.

Silence had vanished! Yet I sought, distressed,
Till at the last I turned me to the throng,
Renounced my search, and, sick with soul's unrest,
Walked 'midst the jarring strife of right and wrong—
There ending, in a maiden's eyes, my quest—
And at the heart of Silence was a song!

THE DISTANT SEA

TO-NIGHT the calling voices of the sea
Sound through my dreams and whisper and beseech;
I hear the waves roll up the pebble-beach
And ever utter, as they break, that plea
That stirs my heart, the very soul of me,
With a wild longing for their passionate speech,
Their solemn, mystic music, that can teach
Lessons whereof they, only, hold the key.

I dream and waken—and my dreamland town,
That little fishing-village in the coombe,
With lights that glint across the bay's blue gloom,
Vanishes. Moaning winds wail up and down,
And the sea-splendours, that I love, make room
For desolate winter landscapes, grey and brown.

PALM SUNDAY

THIS is Palm Sunday. We recall to-day
How once a people claimed Thee as their Lord,
Hailing Thee Christ and King with glad accord
And strewed palm branches all along Thy way.
Alas! poor homage that such lips could pay,
Faint loyalty, that fickle hearts afford,
False service, seeking only some reward,
And hollow prayers that all self-seekers pray!

So we cry out against these blind of heart,
Nor pause to ask what now Thy sad eyes see
Looking for truth, ev'n in the inmost part,
Whilst Thy voice questions, 'Child, dost thou love me?'
Lord, teach us so to love and serve and pray,
That we may know, even we, in this our day!

CLOVELLY

IN MEMORY OF AUGUST 1893

(*To Mrs. F. C. Luke*)

A LITTLE white-walled town, 'neath warm, soft skies,
In warm, soft beauty by the murmuring sea,
Fair with a strange and sweet tranquillity
And rich with many golden memories
Of old-time heroes (gallant hearts and wise,
Who dared, for England's sake, great men to be)
Enwrapped in perfect peace, all drowsily
Beneath the whispering trees Clovelly lies.

Known once, to be forgotten nevermore,
We see its street in visions; catch the gleam
Of sunlight in the woods across the stream,
And in our House of Pleasures, where we store
Our dearest things, we keep that quiet shore
Whose summer waves make music when we dream.

LOST

WE meet and talk of half a hundred things,
Clasp hands and smile and go our several ways,
Just as we often did in bygone days—
The dear, dead days, across which memory flings
A softened light, and from their treasury brings
Sweet recollections, far too sweet to praise,
Cheapening with light words or careless gaze,
And where a fragrance as of roses clings.

Alas! the roses die and friendships fail,
And you have fallen self-stricken from the place
Where once I set you, while an empty space
High in my heart, from which I fain would veil
Mine eyes, makes all within me fear and quail,
Showing how much is lost of life's good grace.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI

IN MEMORIAM: JANUARY 1895

O WOMAN soul, through suffering made strong,
O woman-heart, through agony made pure,
Taught, with a long life's teaching, to endure,
Farewell, farewell! Thy saddened, earthly song
Grows into gladness 'midst the welcoming throng
Of sweet-voiced seraphs. With thine hopes made sure,
And all thy pain finding most perfect cure,
We grieve not at farewell, grief were such wrong.

Therefore not tears, but tender thankfulness,
For this the granting of thine heart's desire,
Which to that dearer country did aspire,
—Home-sick for all its grace and graciousness—
Is what we bring to God, whose name we bless
For one more singer lent us from His choir.

HER PORTRAIT

(*To Olive Custance*)

AH, dear, my Lady, bend your stately head
And smile on me! I watch your pictured face,
Your grave, clear eyes (the fairer for a trace
Of bygone tears your poet-heart has shed),
And long that all these weary years had fled
And I could see you in your queenly grace:
Fain would I stretch across the silent space
And through life's web weave in one golden thread!

Behold I, as a beggar at your door,
Ask not your heart—your heart is not for me—
Nay, but a gracious word, as all my fee
For love that shall endure for evermore;
Yet am I rich, no beggar now, for lo!
This is my pride—*I loved and told you so!*

AUTUMN

ALONG the solemn hills the wet mists creep,
And, slanting all across the sodden plain,
Falls the slow, silver weeping of the rain.
The tired winds mourn for the summer's sleep
(Which seems the summer's death) and vigil keep
Over her rest with shivering sobs of pain,
Sighing through woodlands for the gladness slain,
And wailing desolate-wise from deep to deep.

And is this all? Not so, for in her hand
Autumn bears, queen-like, many a golden gift.
'Days that lend regal beauty to the land
Are mine,' she says, and smiles. The grey glooms lift,
The mighty hills in purple splendour stand,
And her great heart glows where the shadows rift!

UNPOPULARITY

A STRONG man and a true man, and withal
As tender-hearted as a very child,
With a great yearning love that sometimes smiled
From those grave eyes that had beheld no small
Nor trivial share of what we lightly call
'Life's sorrows,' and are speedily beguiled
From thoughts thereon, if so be that their wild
And pitiless tempests touch us not at all!

Not so this man, who toiled and strove and prayed
And lent a kindly hand to those who tired
Along their weary way, and sought the strayed
And cheered the sad. . . . But he had not acquired
That art which had our faults fair virtues made,
So we declared him not to be desired!

A CHRISTMAS ROSE

THIS is the Christ Child's gracious festival,
When little children grow more blithe and gay
And strong men tender, forasmuch to-day
They think upon the manger and the stall
And the dear Lord, Who lived and died for all,
And, so remembering, they put away
All that might turn God's golden to earth's grey,
While gifts and greetings pass 'twixt great and small.

I have a gift for you; it ever grows,
And has so grown it holds me in its power,
Nor grants me respite for one little hour!
—Then, though love comes with winter storms and snows,
Take it, dear heart, and for its token flower
Take this, heaven's whitest thought, a Christmas rose!

RONDEAUS AND OTHER CAPRICES

TRIOLETS

TO THE READER

HERE 'S a wreath of rhymes I bring,
Woven out of Fancy's flowers;
New and old the songs I sing—
Here 's a wreath of rhymes I bring.
Should some fragrance to them cling,
Let them while your idle hours:
Here 's a wreath of rhymes I bring,
Woven out of Fancy's flowers.

SHAMROCKS

THOUGH you search o'er land and sea
Nothing dearer will you find
Than the shamrock, one in three,
Though you search o'er land and sea.
Loved and honoured loyally,
Fairer far than laurels twined,
Though you search o'er land and sea
Nothing dearer will you find!

Give me, then, this leaf to wear,
Tiny symbol of our land;
I am proud the badge to bear—
Give me, then, this leaf to wear!
'May it flourish,' is my prayer,
Token true of Union stand:
Give me, then, this leaf to wear,
Tiny symbol of our land!

A REGRET

FAIRY folk, your dainty grace
And subtle spells have fled the place,
Cast forth by that grim dragon, Steam,
And chilly lights electric gleam
Where your torch-bearers used to pace.

Ah, have they left no smallest space
Where we might still your footsteps trace,
And see you, lovely as a dream,
O fairy folk?

Nay, you are in an evil case,
And none dare show an elfin face
To men intent on weightier theme.
Yet what we lose so (as I deem)
Would profit more our mortal race,
O fairy folk!

A GOLDEN DAY

GOLDEN Day! We sometimes muse
Anent the 'golden age,' and lose
Ourselves in dreams of long ago,
Its statelier life, its charms that glow
With grace which must all faults excuse.

Fate draws our lot: we cannot choose
These times or those. Still, why refuse
To own life, even yet, may show
A golden day?

Yes, through this age we oft accuse
As stern and harsh, those far-off views
Of fairyland, where pleasures flow
We all reach once; once we all know
(Love's bubbles wear such brilliant hues)
A golden day!

CONCERNING JOY

TELL me, my sweet, what look Joy wears
Is he a sprite with wilful airs,
A dimpled, baby-face of bliss,
And such a rose-red mouth to kiss,
Laughing to scorn all doubts and cares?

Alas! this Joy nor hopes nor prayers
Can long detain, 'ere forth he fares;
Yours, of a surety, is not this?
Tell me, my sweet!

The true Joy stays and ever shares
The dangers that the true heart dares,
And lightens all life's loads, I wis;
Love's self is he, unless amiss
I read the name his forehead bears:
Tell me, my sweet!

MISGIVINGS

I LAUNCHED my boat, and smiled to
see
The waves, a-rippling fair and free,
Take her and toss her to and fro.
Then forth she sailed, now fast, now slow,
And far she sailed, in saucy glee:—

So far, I cried 'Return!' but she,
My bonny boat, disdained my plea—
(Was it to-day or long ago
I launched my boat?)

The days wax cold and winterly,
And grey skies, dark with mystery,
Hang overhead. Ah, could I know
How she will fare when rough winds blow!
But this alone is plain to me—
I launched my boat!

SWEET VIOLETS

SWEET violets, who won Shakespeare's
praise
Amidst the gayer flowers that blaze
In his immortal garden-ground,
Whom all his tuneful followers found
The dearest, to a poet's gaze—

Let me, unworthy, tread their ways
And welcome you with blithe spring days,
Whose gracious gladness you have crowned,
Sweet violets!

Your perfumed, purple beauty sways
A sceptre every heart obeys;
You shed upon the air around
Hope's harmonies, songs without sound;
'Dawn follows dark,' your message says,
Sweet violets!

THE REASON WHY

THEY two fell out. Who can explain
Why 'trifles light as air' should strain
The strength of love, or cause a maid
To change from sunshine into shade,
Freezing with airs of chill disdain?

Alas! our wisdom here is vain.
Low lay fair *chateaux en Espagne*
Because ('tis useless to upbraid)
They two fell out!

Nay, whisper low: 'twas not all pain,
This Interregnum in the reign
Of Love, their Lord, who, undismayed,
Beheld the comedy they played . . .
'Twas that they might make peace again
They two fell out!

A RONDEL OF RETURNING

LOVE came home in the winter weather,
An all unbidden, unlooked-for guest,
Weary of wandering, ready to rest—
'Twas long since Life and Love were together!

Yet she opened the door, nor asked him whether
He had found her heart, after all, the best:
Love came home in the winter weather,
An all unbidden, unlooked-for guest!

Back with him came scent of the heather,
And dreams of summer, in splendour dressed;
Springtide sweetness, at his behest,
Smiled through the snowstorm, each flake like a feather,
For Love came home in the winter weather!

TO LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON

(VILLANELLE)

SWEET singer of the silver rhymes,
Whose hand holds fast the star-crowned lyre,
Welcome, thrice welcome, in these times!

Thou hast the passion that sublimes,
The earnest soul, the heart of fire,
Sweet singer of the silver rhymes!

Like whispering wind through leafy limes
Are these thy songs our heart's desire—
Welcome, thrice welcome, in these times.

Thou hast caught strains of elfin chimes,
Harmonies of an unseen choir,
Sweet singer of the silver rhymes!

Upward thy daring spirit climbs
(Who would grow great must so aspire).
Welcome, thrice welcome, in these times!

And we are glad that of our climes
Comes one who so can toil, nor tire—
Welcome, thrice welcome, in these times,
Sweet singer of the silver rhymes!

A SUMMER IDYLL

SO, hand in hand, beloved, and heart to heart,
We stand at length, the long, chill winter o'er,
Learning in Sorrow's dreary school no more;
No more in pain and fear held far apart,
But, lingering where the summer sunbeams dart
Their golden gladness down, we con Love's lore.

Radiance of summer dawning smiles again
With strange, sweet splendour, as in days of old;
The fragrant roses dreamful grace unfold,
And stately lilies, proudly free from stain,
Whisper to us of joyance still to gain,
A story with its tend'rest words untold.

Yea, now for us the world is made anew!
With all our bygone grief we have no part;
Love, touching all things with his wondrous art,
Has made the green grass greener, sky more blue,
Birds sing with rapture—all because that you
Stand hand in hand with me and heart to heart!

MIRAGE

ALONE I wandered in the desert land,
With weary feet across the barren sand;
The hot, harsh wind blew clouds of hot,
harsh dust,
And Hope was fainting, faint were Love and Trust,
When, lo! a vision rose before mine eyes,
Filling me with a rapture of surprise,
And Hope, reviving, stretched her glad hands out,
While Love and Trust arose and banished Doubt.
A land of rarest beauty met my gaze,
A land of woods, of cool and pleasant ways,
Dim shadows, murmuring waters, rest and peace,
Where all my toilsome wayfaring might cease.
Full of a wild desire, I hastened on,
When, swift as summer lightning, all was gone!

Gone, and the wide waste tenfold desert more
For that one glimpse that seemed Heaven's open door,
Tenfold more pitiless the scorching blaze
Of the great sun, whose searching, cloudless rays
Beat down on me, on me whose Hope lay dead,
Whose very Love and Trust at last had fled!

THE UNSEEN

' RE they so near?' We stretch our hands and cry
For sign or token, but win no reply
Save empty echoes in the empty air.
O patience, patience! Doubt not they are there,
Those dear ones, in our hearts for ever kept,
Counting our saddest sighs, the tears we wept,
Watching in tenderest sympathy and love,
Pure messengers of mercy from above!
But those alone their message can receive
Who never, in their bitterest woes, believe
Themselves forgotten, nor their lot unjust,
But wait with loyal hearts and tireless trust.
To such as these come, from the spirit-land,
Sweet comforters, bearing with outstretched hand
Leaves of the tree that heal all wounds at length
—Unseen, indeed, but strong with gracious strength.

Then let us hush our weary, faithless moan,
Assured we need no burden bear alone;
Rest on the Love that has such great things given,
And every grief will prove a gate of Heaven!

CROSS-PURPOSES

A WORLD that must be lost or won,
Chance and change till the game is done,
Weft and warp till the web is spun!

Life and death that hang on a thread,
Strength and weakness for ever wed,
Truth downtrodden and honour fled!

Right and wrong in an endless strife,
Faltering faith and falsehood rife,
Is there an end or aim for life?

Yet there 's the world to lose or gain,
And here are you, with heart and brain;
Who dare say they were given in vain?

Never that! with your heart for key
Doors you may open closed to me
And a glimpse of Paradise see.

There you would find an answer clear
To all the contradictions here—
Scarcely, though, to them all I fear.

For some, I think, we still must wait
Till work is done, and, soon or late,
We may pass the Beautiful Gate.

There, I am certain, we shall find
Comfort and rest for heart and mind,
All that perplexes left behind.

So now to face the toil and fret,
Meeting all that must needs be met,
Sure of a happy ending yet!

Printed by T. and A. Constable, Printers to Her Majesty
at the Edinburgh University Press